

Wanted! Volunteer Weather Observers in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island

CoCoRaHS, the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail, and Snow network is a national non-profit network of volunteers who work together to measure and map precipitation throughout the year.

This data is entered into a centralized repository where it is available to everyday people interested in better understanding how weather can affect and impact their lives.

The [National Weather Service](#), the [National Center for Environmental Predictions](#), State Climate Offices, local gardeners, and agricultural groups use CoCoRaHS data to monitor precipitation on a day-to-day basis. These organizations collect the volunteers' data to monitor flood forecasts, rainfall estimates, monthly climate summaries and drought conditions across the country.

Throughout this month, CoCoRaHS will host its annual March recruiting competition. While the event helps to generate more accurate precipitation estimates, its true purpose is to increase the number of volunteers throughout all 50 states.

“CoCoRaHS reports are crucial not only to our day-to-day operations to assist in the issuance of warnings for hazardous weather, but to help compile monthly precipitation statistics used for drought analysis in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island,” said Nicole Belk, Senior Service Hydrologist at the National Weather Service in Taunton. “We are looking to add more observers to the network in order to provide the best data possible to water resource managers in southern New England. Volunteers are needed region wide, whether you live near the coast or near the Berkshires and Litchfield Hills,” Belk added. “The CoCoRaHS slogan is ‘Every Drop Counts’ and that means we're happy to have volunteers 50 miles apart or right next door to one another.”

There are no prerequisites or qualifications to become involved – simply a desire to go outside to take weather observations will suffice. Getting started is easy, and volunteers can take online training to learn how to read and maintain a measuring tool called a gauge, take snow measurements and report data.

Then, before heading off to school or work, volunteers simply observe and record the weather and take any necessary measurements depending on the type of precipitation. Data collected is reported by uploading it on the CoCoRaHS website or by using the organization's smartphone app.

When life gets busy, volunteers can enter multi-day precipitation reports to make up for missed days – numbers that are just as valuable for monthly, seasonal and annual data studies.

In addition to helping the weather community, volunteers also personally benefit from the program. Many volunteers use the data they collect to determine when to water their gardens or lawns or to better interpret unusual weather patterns that occur throughout the year.

“In the summer it can rain over an inch at one house with pop-up afternoon thunderstorms, but a few miles away there may be no rain at all. That variability is better understood if we have more ground truth rainfall observations. As a volunteer, you have the chance to help the climate and weather community better understand what’s happening in your very own backyard,” said Belk.

To sign up, visit the [CoCoRaHS website](#). For more information, visit one of the State Pages listed below or contact your State Coordinator:

Connecticut: Matt Spies (matt.spies@att.net)

Massachusetts: Joe DelliCarpini (Joseph.Dellicarpini@noaa.gov)

Rhode Island: Bill Simpson (William.Simpson@noaa.gov) or Joe DelliCarpini

